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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/WATERS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#)

SUBJECT: CODEL PRICE MEETS WITH PLC MEMBERS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: During a May 29-31 visit, Codel Price--Reps. David Price (D-NC, Chairman of the House Democracy Assistance Commission), Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE), Nick Rahall (D-WV), and Gwen Moore (D-WI)--met with three current and former PLC members and civil society representatives. PLC member Abdullah Abdullah urged more robust involvement of the Quartet and other third parties in the region and said Hamas will not pursue peace while Israeli targets its leaders. Bir Zayt University representatives expressed satisfaction with USAID support to establish a legislative support unit at the university, but said the USG requirement of the anti-terrorism certificate (ATC) limits the scope of the Bir Zayt-USAID partnership.

PLC Members Need International  
Support To Enable Fatah Reform  
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¶2. (SBU) In a May 30 lunch with PLC members Abdullah Abdullah and Jihad Abu Znayd, and former PLC member Qadura Faris, Abdullah said political progress between Israelis and Palestinians requires greater engagement from the Quartet and other outside parties. He said he sees no Israeli effort to implement the Road Map or support the Arab Peace Initiative. Abdullah said Israeli targeting of Hamas leaders for assassination or arrest in Gaza complicates Hamas, ability to make peace. He added that "these actions stain Israeli democracy" and said efforts should be made to stop Israeli operations in Gaza.

¶3. (SBU) Jihad Abu Znayd said a gap exists between Fatah leaders and the people. To address this gap, she said Fatah must target women and youth. She said Fatah must strengthen grassroots NGOs affiliated with the party to generate local support. Qadura Faris added that Fatah's leaders, not the grassroots, are the problem, and even if some reforms are implemented at the grassroots, they may not have an effect at the national level.

Legislative Accountability Program  
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¶4. (SBU) Dr. Muhammad al-Ambayd and Stephen Terravecchia of Development Alternatives, Inc. (implementing a USAID program on legislative accountability/transparency), who also attended the lunch, told the Codel that the PLC agenda has been contested over the past 14 months. The PLC has not passed any laws, they said, and this has weakened Palestinians' trust in the legislative body. They said that prior to formation of the national unity government (NUG), Fatah did not attend PLC sessions to prevent a quorum of legislators from deliberating, and expressed concern that a Hamas-led agenda (including on personal status issues) would dominate legislative activity. They described the PLC

bureaucratic systems and staff skills as weak and said they would like an electronic voting system to monitor members, voting records.

¶5. (SBU) Dr. Samer Faris and Jamil Salam of Bir Zayt University, which is a recipient of a training program for legislative analysis, said the USG,s anti-terrorism certification (ATC) requirement prevents Bir Zayt from developing a more formal partnership with USAID. The representatives said signing a grant including the ATC would compromise the university's neutrality and risk loss of local credibility.

¶6. (U) CODEL Price cleared this message.  
WALLES